

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) issued the following statement today regarding U.S. military involvement in Iraq following testimony by General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker before a joint House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committee hearing:

“I respect General Petraeus as an honorable man who serves our nation. Unfortunately, General Petraeus’ report to Congress was more of the same rhetoric, which we have heard all too many times from this Administration. I was truly taken back by his continued defense of the Administration’s misguided and ill-conceived war, which has cost this country far too many lives.

“The original objective of the ‘surge’ outlined by the Administration was to quell the violence and create stability for an Iraqi political reconciliation. However, having just recently visited Iraq, it is overwhelmingly clear to me that the ‘surge’ objectives are not being met.

“In fact, major assessments of the war released in the last two weeks, including reports from the non-partisan Government Accountability Office and General Jim Jones, have described elevated levels of violence with no sign of political reconciliation in sight.

“Today, I watched with disbelief as General Petraeus advised another year before we return to pre-surge troop levels. We simply can not afford another year in Iraq.

“We must get back to focusing on issues here at home, like health care, our crumbling infrastructure, and economic growth. We can no longer afford to spend \$16 million an hour in Iraq while roads and bridges in Upstate New York are left without repairs.

“As a Member of Congress, my job is to look at what is best for the entire country. What I saw in Iraq, what I’ve read in recent reports, and what I hear from my constituents is clear: we must immediately begin to safely and responsibly bring our brave men and women home as soon as possible.”

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